

Message Text

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SUBJECT: VISIT OF LABOR JOURNALIST, VICTOR RIESEL

REF: USIA 14930; STATE 148629; VIENNA 6245

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH SUMMER VACATION PERIOD PRECLUDED PROGRAMMING RIESEL FOR LECTURE OR SEMINAR, VISITOR DID HAVE MEANINGFUL PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH CHANCELLOR KREISKY AND ATUF PRESIDENT BENYA, INTERVIEWS BY VIENNESE JOURNALISTS AND A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH AUSTRIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION EDITORS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS SECRETARIES. END SUMMARY.

2. RIESEL'S MEETING WITH AUSTRIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION PRESIDENT BENYA, WHICH LABATT ATTENDED, DEALT PRIMARILY WITH EAST-WEST TRADE UNION EXCHANGES INCLUDING DIFFERING ATTITUDES ON THIS SUBJECT BETWEEN AFL-CIO AND ATUF LEADERS. BENYA FURTHER DESCRIBED AUSTRIA'S "SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP" CONCEPT AND ITS INSTITUTIONALIZATION THROUGH THE BI-PARTITE WAGE/PRICE COMMISSION WHICH IMPRESSED RIESEL FAVORABLY AS MECHANISM TO MAINTAIN INDUSTRIAL PEACE. RIESEL'S MEETING WITH CHANCELLOR KREIESKYN

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WHICH HE HAD ARRANGED ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE, WAS LARGELY

A COURTESY CALL ALTHOUGH DISCUSSION OF TRADE UNION POLICY DIFFERENCES ON E-W TRADE UNION CONTACTS ELICITED EXPRESSION OF REGRET BY KREISKY THAT AFL-CIO LEFT ICFTU PRIMARILY OVER THIS ISSUE. KREISKY ALSO TOUCHED ON IMPORTANCE THAT AUSTRIA ATTACHES TO SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF CSCE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH, IN HIS VIEW, COULD BE AN ADDITIONAL ELEMENT IN ACHIEVING DETENT PROVIDING WESTERN EUROPE MAINTAINS ITS STRENGTH AND COHESION.

3. LOCAL EDITORS MET RIESEL OVER A LUNCHEON AND AT A

HEURIGEN (COUNTRY WINE HOUSE) EVENING, BOTH HOSTED BY INFO OFFICER. TWO PAPERS, SOCIALIST "ARBEITER-ZEITUNG" AND THE PRESTIGIOUS INDEPENDENT DAILY, "DIE PRESSE" SENT REPORTERS FOR SPECIAL INTERVIEWS. AZ GAVE MOST OF BACK PAGE TO VERY FAVORABLE PICTURE STORY - PROFILE ON RIESEL; "DIE PRESSE'S" SHORTER ITEM STATED THAT RIESEL WAS CRITICAL OF AUSTRIAN UNIONS FOR NOT HELPING CONTROL INFLATION. LATTER ARTICLE ANGERED RIESEL, WHO CLAIMED HE HAD SAID NOTHING CONCERNING THE AUSTRIAN SITUATION. "DIE PRESSE" PRINTED RIESEL STATEMENT CORRECTING ITS STORY, AND A SENIOR EDITOR TOLD RIESEL ERRONEOUS REPORT WAS FAULT OF HIS REPORTER. RIESEL, WITH ASSISTANCE OF EMBASSY, SET RECORD STRAIGHT WITH BENYA AND KREISKY'S OFFICE BEFORE LEAVING VIENNA.

4. DESPITE INCIDENT WITH "DIE PRESSE", MISSION BELIEVES RIESEL VISIT VERY WORTHWHILE. RIESEL IMPRESSIVE AND LIVELY, ESPECIALLY WHEN DISCUSSING AMERICAN LABOR UNIONS AND THEIR POLITICAL POWER. HIS TALKS GAVE NEW INSIGHTS ON SUBJECT ON WHICH POST HAS HAD FEW AUTHORITATIVE VISITORS. HIS BLINDNESS POSED NO PROBLEM IN PROGRAMMING. MOWINCKEL

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